

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 H-02 CCO-00 NSCE-00  
L-03 /035 W

-----031871 171914Z /50  
Z 162157Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 6127

UNCLAS PANAMA 01777

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CLASS CHANGE & DELETION OF CAPTION)

PASS WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESIDENT CARTER

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PN, PEPR  
SUBJECT: GENERAL TORRIJOS LETTER TO PRESIDENT DATED MARCH 15,  
1978

1. HAVE JUST RECEIVED FOLLOWING LETTER (UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION)  
FROM GENERAL TORRIJOS FOR PRESIDENT CARTER:

QUOTE PANAMA, MARCH 15, 1978

DEAR PRESIDENT CARTER:

IN YOUR KIND LETTER OF THIS DATE, AS WELL AS IN THE  
CONVERSATION WHICH WE HAD THIS AFTERNOON, YOU EXPRESSED TO  
ME, AMONG OTHER THINGS, YOUR HOPE CONCERNING A POSITIVE VOTE  
IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE ON THE NEUTRALITY TREATY. I  
UNDERSTAND AND I HAVE PERCEIVED THE GREAT EFFORTS WHICH YOU,  
AS HEAD OF A GREAT NATION AS WELL AS THOSE OF NUMEROUS DISTIN-  
GUISHED SENATORS, HAVE CARRIED OUT TO CREATE A CONSCIOUSNESS  
IN THE REST OF THE SENATE AND IN THE AMERICAN PUBLIC FOR THE NEED  
FOR A NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PANAMA AND THE UNITED STATES.

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AFTER INTENSE AND DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS WE SIGNED  
THE RESULTING TREATIES IN WASHINGTON. SUBSEQUENTLY, AND ON ACCOUNT  
OF CERTAIN CONFUSION WITH RESPECT TO TWO ARTICLES OF THE  
NEUTRALITY TREATY, WE PROCEEDED TO RELEASE A MEMORANDUM OF  
UNDERSTANDING WHICH CLEARLY INTERPRETED THE UNILATERAL CAPA-  
BILITY OF EACH ONE OF OUR COUNTRIES TO PROTECT THE REGIME OF  
NEUTRALITY AGAINST THREATS, ATTACKS, OR A CLOSING OF THE CANAL,

PRIORITY PASSAGE FOR WARSHIPS IN CASE OF EMERGENCY AND  
NON-INTERVENTION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF PANAMA AS WELL AS  
A RESPECT FOR TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE  
OF MY COUNTRY.

IN THIS MANNER WE PERFECTED TREATIES WHICH HAVE RE-  
CEIVED, BECAUSE OF THEIR BALANCE AND EQUITY, THE SUPPORT OF  
PRACTICALLY ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD.

IN YOUR LETTER AND CONVERSATION YOU INFORMED ME THAT  
THE SENATE WILL INTRODUCE SOME RESERVATIONS, BUT THAT THEY  
WILL NOT ALTER NOR DETRACT FROM THE CONTENT OF WHAT WAS AGREED  
UPON IN THE NEUTRALITY TREATY AND IN OUR DECLARATION OF OCTOBER  
14, 1977. IN THIS RESPECT, I WISH TO INFORM YOU THAT THE GOVERN-  
MENT OF PANAMA WILL PROCEED TO STUDY CAREFULLY THESE RESERVA-  
TIONS AND WILL TAKE ITS POSITION ONCE THE SENATE HAS VOTED ON  
BOTH TREATIES. THE SITUATION IS THUS BECAUSE IN THE PLEBISCITE  
HELD IN PANAMA THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE VOTED FOR THE TWO TREATIES  
TOGETHER AND NOT IN SEPARATE FORM.

I DO WISH, NEVERTHELESS, TO POINT OUT THAT SUCH A  
STUDY WILL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTS; FOR PANAMA ANY  
RESERVATION WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE WHICH BLEMISHED OUR NATIONAL  
DIGNITY, WHICH ALTERED OR CHANGED THE OBJECTIVES OF THE TREATY  
OR WHICH WERE DIRECTED AT HINDERING THE EFFECTIVE EXERCISE OF  
PANAMANIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER ALL OF ITS TERRITORY, THE TRANSFER  
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OF THE CANAL, AND MILITARY WITHDRAWAL ON DECEMBER 31, 1999.

FOR THAT REASON, I RECEIVED WITH GREAT GRATITUDE YOUR  
WORDS THAT THESE OBJECTIVES WILL ABSOLUTELY NOT BE CHANGED BY  
MEANS OF AMENDMENTS OR RESERVATIONS. THIS REAFFIRMS MY  
ESTIMATE CONCERNING THE GREAT MORALITY AND HONESTY WHICH  
CHARACTERIZES YOU AS A POLITICAL LEADER AND AS A PERSON.

THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE WOULD NOT ACCEPT WORDS, MISPLACED  
COMMAS OR AMBIGUOUS SENTENCES WHICH HAD AS THEIR OBJECTIVE,  
OR WHICH MIGHT SIGNIFY, OCCUPATION IN PERPETUITY DISGUISED AS  
NEUTRALITY OR INTERVENTION IN THEIR INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

PRESIDENT CARTER: WE BOTH KNOW THE DIFFICULTIES  
WHICH WE MUST OVERCOME TO ACHIEVE A NEW ATTITUDE IN OUR TWO  
COUNTRIES. BUT THE EXPRESSIIIONS WHICH YOU HAVE MADE TO ME  
REVEAL THE INITIMATE TRUTHS OF A MAN OF GREAT INTEGRITY. WE  
BELIEVE THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ELECTED YOU PRECISELY FOR  
THESE QUALITIES. THEREFORE, WITH THE FRANKNESS WHICH HAS  
CHARACTERIZED OUR RELATIONSHIP, I MUST TELL YOU THAT WE MUST  
FACE ALL OF THESE DIFFICULTIES ABOUT THE TREATIES WITH TRUE  
COURAGE.

THE GREAT POWER OF CONVICTION WHICH YOU HAVE MUST  
REACH THE TRUE AND UPRIGHT MEN OF YOUR SENATE. IN YOUR  
COUNTRY THERE EXISTS GREAT PROOF OF THIS FACT BY VIRTUE OF MEN  
WHO HAVE NEVER CONSIDERED ARROGANCE OR THREATS AS NORMAL STANDARDS  
OF CONDUCT IN THE UNITED STATES IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE VARIOUS  
SECTORS OF ITS OWN PEOPLE AND IN ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER  
COUNTRIES. FOR THAT REASON LINCOLN, FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT,  
KENNEDY AND OTHER GREAT AMERICAN PRESIDENTS HOLD A PLACE IN  
THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES AND SERVE AS AN INSPIRATION  
TO OTHER PEOPLES OF THE WORLD.

IT IS OBVIOUS THAT NOT ONLY PANAMA BUT THE ENTIRE WORLD  
ANXIOUSLY AWAITS THE DECISION WHICH THE SENATE WILL MAKE TO-  
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MORROW. THE CANAL, AS AN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE, IS  
OF INTEREST TO ALL HUMANITY. FOR THAT REASON, WE SEE IN THE  
TREATIES WHICH WE SIGNED THE PEACEFUL SOLUTION WHICH GUARANTEES  
ACCESS TO THE CANAL ON AN EQUAL BASIS TO ALL ITS USERS. PANAMA  
HAS MADE ITS GREAT SACRIFICE: TO WAIT 22 LONG YEARS TO ACHIEVE  
ITS DECOLONIZATION. WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED MATURITY AND  
PATIENCE. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE SENATE WILL NOT DIS-  
APPOINT THE WORLD.

LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS MY HIGHEST  
ESTEEM.

OMAR TORRIJOS HERRERA  
CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA  
END TEXT.

ORIGINAL WILL BE POUCHED  
JORDEN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, CANALS, CAT-B, NEGOTIATIONS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 16 mar 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Subject:** GENERAL TORRIJOS LETTER TO PRESIDENT DATED MARCH 15, 1978  
**TAGS:** PEPR, PPDC, PBOR, PDEV, PN, PM, US, (CARTER, JIMMY), (TORRIJOS HERRERA, OMAR)  
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